

**City/Parish Recreation Advisory Commission**  
**April 11, 2016, Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance:**

**Commission:**

Danny LeBlanc  
Leroy Barrington  
William LaBar  
Harold Porter

Judy Placer  
Michael Helms  
Frank Hebert  
Darrel "Buffy" Massey

**Absent:**

Johnnie Stinson, Jr.  
Ted Weber  
Brian McCarley

**Staff:**

Gerald Boudreaux *Ans*  
William Leyendecker  
Wayne Wills  
Nourine Lanerie

Greg Gautreaux  
Todd Robertson  
David Gary

**Guests:**

Merlin Leger, Frank Wittenberg, Councilwoman Nanette Cook

Meeting called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Gerald Boudreaux. Opened with a prayer and the pledge of allegiance. Gerald asks for a moment of silence for Jimmy Weber, who passed away over the weekend. Mr. Weber is the father of Todd Weber, former commission member and Ted Weber, current commission member.

Gerald explained that Johnnie Stinson had to work late, so he will not be in attendance tonight.

**Council Liaison Team:**

Gerald welcomed Councilwoman Nanette Cook, Chairperson of our Council Liaison Team, which also includes Councilwoman Liz Hebert and Councilman Jared Bellard. She says she is very happy to be here, and is looking forward to working with everyone here.

**Newest Commission Member:**

Gerald welcomed Judy Placer, the newest Commission Member. She was appointed by Councilwoman Cook. Judy informed the other members that she was pleased with the appointment to serve; was born and raised in Lafayette; she was a physical education teacher for 35 years, most of those years at Cathedral Carmel; she plays golf on a regular basis, and has also played tennis at Beaver Park. She adds that the golf courses and parks are beautiful and in good shape.

**New Departmental Executive Secretary:**

Gerald welcomed everyone and introduced Nourine Lanerie as the new Departmental Executive Secretary. He explained that she will be the point of contact for Commission Members. Frank Hebert asks how Alix is enjoying her retirement; Gerald explained that



she seems to be enjoying it, and is taking some potpourri classes at UL. He adds that she was very helpful in the transition.

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes/Monthly Reports (Action Required):**

Monthly reports and financial statements, along with the previous minutes, had been mailed. Gerald asks if anyone had questions; no questions or comments. Harold Porter motioned to accept the February minutes as written, seconded by Darrel "Buffy" Massey; no opposition, motion passed unanimously.

Gerald explained how we started this year with transition of the commission members; Johnnie Stinson assumed the role of acting Chairperson. Although Johnnie is absent tonight, he called and said he would accept the position of Chairperson if elected by the members.

**Election of Officers:**

**Chairperson:** Frank Hebert nominated Johnnie Stinson as Chairperson, seconded by Darrel "Buffy" Massey; no other nominations, no opposition; Johnnie Stinson is unanimously elected as Chairperson.

**Vice Chairperson:** Frank Hebert nominated Harold Porter as Vice Chairperson, seconded by Danny LeBlanc; no other nominations, no opposition; Harold Porter is unanimously elected as Vice Chairperson.

**Director's Report – Gerald Boudreaux**

Gerald asked if there were any questions regarding current monthly reports; no questions. He explained that reports can be taken home out of the folders, and members can always submit questions at a later date. Harold Porter motioned to accept Director's Report, seconded by Michael Helms; no opposition; motion passed unanimously.

A copy of the Parks and Recreation Department's operating budget is provided for members in the left pocket of the binder, members are encouraged to take it home with them. This document is what the Department operates by from November 1, 2015 until October 31, 2016.

Timetable for Budget: The first quarter closes March 31 – April starts budget prep for next fiscal year. Proposed budget to the Administration is due in May, basic information. The sales tax is down in the Parish (20%); the City side has a little more flexibility. Our instructions are to look at a status quo budget; you all are the ambassadors; due to inflationary cost, status quo doesn't handle the increase. We have utility costs for all of our facilities. The inflationary cost annually is approximately 3%...so in turn we have to cut 3-4% to remain status quo to continue to do the things we are doing today. We want to make sure that we meet the basic needs from a recreation standpoint. Rekeisha Thomas, our Budget Analyst, is meeting with all of the managers to crunch numbers. The low fuel cost has allowed us to maintain all of our vehicles. Greg Gautreaux and Frank Wittenberg draw up a wish list and work with the municipalities and neighborhood youth programs.



We will prepare a document and share with the commission members; we will turn that in to the Administration in May. Our next Recreation Commission meeting is in June, budget meeting in July, and public meeting in August, which is the meeting we ask you to attend. When the Council gets requests from all departments, they have to be in reduction mode. Please communicate to your council member, have a one on one meeting with them, so the council members understand what we need. Expenditures are more than what is allocated for current year.

Commissioner's Commitment/Attendance-Participation: Your commitment to this commission to serve as an ambassador; to answer questions.

William LaBar asked about last year's comprehensive plan – how is the process working? Gerald explains that we submit a proposed budget and they will also; there will either be a direct allocation tied to comprehensive plan; where it gets plugged in will be on the Administration; we have to make sure we get it all.

William Labar comments that there are lots of interesting things going on at Girard Park and asks about the grant. Gerald explains that the grant is over; we have plugged those fees into our budget, we have inherited the program. William asks if there any other grants and if there is someone dedicated to looking at these? Gerald explains that the Community Development Department has the grant writers that look for all departments within LCG; we do not have a dedicated resource within our department; however, Community Development assists us once we identify it. There are also federal matches out there; these matches are usually available to small municipalities. We are continuing to partnership with businesses to assist.

William LaBar asks if we have any major projects to take place this year. Gerald explains that as far as capital, nothing major on the schedule. We do have some park improvements and improvements to some existing facilities. For example, lining of swimming pools, overlaying of tennis courts, and routine upkeep and maintenance. We have \$50,000 set aside for each of the golf courses. Everything that is in capital is an existing project that we are trying to beautify.

Frank Hebert asks if we can negotiate contracts to keep overpayment in the Parks and Recreation Department. Gerald explains that the overpayment of funding remains in the council reserve and we don't necessarily want to keep that money. The only way to keep it is if we can identify it through a change order. Frank Hebert asks if we need the money, can we go to the council. Gerald explains that only if we can justify that we need it; however, 7-8 times out of 10, we don't come in under bid, we have to go back and ask for more. At the end of project, the money goes back into the reserve, that's just the nature of the beast. Contractors know how it works; they won't leave any money on the table.



**Athletic Programs/Parks Maintenance – Greg Gautreaux**

**Project Update:**

Girard Park Coulee Project - had the final inspections two weeks ago, which enclosed the open ditch. Cost was approximately \$600,000.

Clark Field – renovation of restrooms, final inspection tomorrow. With the help of the Kiwanis club, we came together and remodeled whole facility. Cost was \$200,000.

Beaver Park- overlay of tennis courts – bid date postponed and will be re-established. Approximate cost - \$190,000.

Scott Park – we plan to lay asphalt between the fields. We have \$150,000 in budget, and will work with the City of Scott for additional funding, hopefully they will be able to assist us financially.

Wildlife and Fisheries – last year we had a grant that was supposed to be for eight months, but only lasted four months, it is continuing this year. We stocked the pond at Girard Park with rainbow trout in December and catfish in March (300 lbs., stock again later this month).

Baseball/Softball season – opening ceremonies took place across the Parish last weekend. Our numbers are definitely down – 94 teams down from last year. Youngsville/Broussard new program has affected CSA and BYYA directly; SWA has also been affected. Frank Wittenberg provided updated numbers, we are actually 104 teams down; 1300 kids at new Youngsville facility.

Frank Hebert asks what decision was made regarding league play. Greg explains that we are staying with Pony. We have been with Pony since the 60's. We will stay with it this season and evaluate how it works in post season. Pony is also being played in Youngsville. Harold Porter asks if that is infringing on our territory according to Pony National Guidelines. Greg explains that it is. Judy Placer asks why Youngsville isn't a part of us; Greg explained that they are funded by their own city tax, not LCG funds. Pony is allowing them to play even though we have parks in close proximity. BYYA is our area – Youngsville is on their own millage. Buffy Massey adds that they just cut the ribbon for a new indoor facility. Discussion regarding completion of road going through Beaulieu Park to alleviate traffic was held.

It's getting close to summertime, and some of our indoor facilities are getting old, but we are basically maintaining what we have. We were planning to put a new liner in the Girard Park pool, but that has been pushed back until August. Cost of liner – approximately \$120,000.



**Hebert Golf Course – Wayne Wills**

Play has been consistent, although March was down from February, mainly due to the economy. On a positive note, greens are in good shape considering tough transition. Warm, wet weather is just as bad as cold, frigid weather; it delays grass thickening on the greens. Clients are not bashful with their feedback, but the majority of comments are good. We have seven full time employees; one has been out for almost a year with a serious heart condition. We are about to move into our new maintenance building. Once completed, we will the beautify area where old carts are; right now we have a lot of equipment out in the weather. Gerald advises that the price tag on the new facility was around \$366,469. Wayne explains that they would like to put up safety netting and chain link fencing around maintenance building. The plan is to plant vines around building, and hopefully in a year it will look better. We are in the process of developing a nursery green area which will be utilized to make repairs on the course in a timely and economical manner. Discussion follows.

William LaBar asks if revenue is dropping, how we handle that budget. Gerald explained that we have an enterprise fund, all three golf courses into one fund; the Wetlands was built as a high end course. The objective is for all three to pull the load; so far, all three courses have been able to produce. In a status quo budget, we will have to prioritize – as to who gets funding and how it will all work. – can we maintain three golf courses with money within Parks and Recreation. The golf courses are now on par with handling the slow season. Acadian Hills Golf Courses closed and the Farm is slow, so more golfers are playing at our courses. We've been able to maintain quality courses; they generated approximately \$3,000,000 on last year. Judy Placer mentioned that she has played at all three golf courses in the last three months, and she is amazed at the great condition they are in, and how well they drain. Gerald explained that Public Works has helped us a lot with the drainage, and they are always there when we need; we have spent a lot of money on drainage at the golf courses. Buffy Massey asks if anything has been implemented, due to the economy, to have lower fees for golf based on income, like we do for the youth athletic programs. Gerald explains that we only allow financial hardships for youth programs, but not for adult programs. However, we do have a reduced twilight fee for late in the evening.

**Wetlands – David Gary**

The golf course is in good condition, but we have had a few issues with the greens. Economy is playing a big part, but the biggest part on a monthly basis is weather related. The weather determines whether we're successful in that given month. We've had lots of rained out weekends, losing lots of revenues and rounds. We keep records, and the weather has a larger effect than the economy. For example, we've hosted the Lafayette Oilman Tournament for the past 10 years, it was cancelled this year due to the economy; \$25,000 reduction in revenue. Lots of events at golf course, low participation is somewhat oilfield related. But we're still busy; we have a captive audience, and receive a lot of play because of the limited number of golf courses. We are treating a bipolaris fungus grass problem. Our new Golf Course Superintendent is Thomas Eschete. The position was vacant for five months. He is a very hard worker, very happy to have him;



definitely the right man for the job. We currently have 14 on staff. Upcoming events through May: doing work on bunkers, replacing sand, and other beautification projects.

**Les Vieux Chenes – Todd Robertson**

Economy is affecting us a little; however, oilfield workers that are laid off have been playing golf on their annual pass. They are letting their memberships go at the private courses and are playing at public courses. Quarterly budget report, March was awful. I called six PGA counterparts to see how their greens are, how their revenue was in March. At the Baton Rouge Country club, the Superintendent almost lost his job because of the quality of the course, grass was not good. Their numbers were down by 28% in February, up by 28% in March. So, we're not missing the boat, we're doing what we can with what we got. We met with the Public Works engineers regarding drainage on 13 and 14; senior golfers have been complaining. This is first time we've had to close them in 10 years. Our fairways are in the best shape they've ever been. We have 10 full time maintenance workers.

**Centers and Programs – William Leyendecker**

The Parks and Recreation Annual Easter Hunt on Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> was a rousing success. The line to enter Thomas Park at 10:00 a.m. began forming at 9:40 a.m. and went down the median and wrapped around into the parking lot. The estimated number of parents and children was around 300-350. Once inside Thomas Park, the children were treated to games, arts and crafts, and pictures with the Easter Bunny. At 11:00 a.m., everyone went outside to designated age-specific areas for the Easter Egg Hunt. 10 golden eggs were found and Easter baskets were awarded. Dick's Sporting Goods handed out promotional items and two members of the MLK Association helped serve drinks.

The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts at Comeaux and Robicheaux Recreation Centers have offered to build planters and plant spring flowers. The Girl Scouts at Comeaux are also interested in establishing a Little Free Library inside of the recreation center.

The refurbished outdoor basketball court at Heymann Park will be unveiled on Friday, April 15, 2016. Representatives from the New Orleans Pelicans, two State Representatives, City-Parish Councilman Kenneth Boudreaux, and Mayor-President Joel Robideaux will speak. At 11:00 a.m., the Pelicans Dance Team will hold the ribbon while the dignitaries cut it, officially opening the court. Immediately after the ribbon-cutting, a mini basketball clinic will begin.

Summer Enrichment Camp 2016 information is currently available on-line and at the Girard Park Administrative Offices. Applications for supervisors began in late December with orientation set for May 18 and 19. Registration forms will be mailed out May 4 to past participants and regular registration will occur from May 24 through June 3. The program begins on Monday, June 13 and ends on Friday, July 29.

**Miscellaneous:**

Buffy Massey asks for more information on the ribbon cutting ceremonies on April 15, 2016 at Heymann Park. Gerald explains that the Pelicans refurbished the basketball court; Representative Vincent Pierre chose Heymann Park. The unveiling was originally scheduled for Easter break, but was cancelled due to rain. The cost was \$27,000 to refurbish. Greg advised that we might have some kids from Paul Breaux attending; Greg explained that they paint over the existing court. In the past Nancy Landry chose Picard Park and Milton Park for the Pelicans to refurbish a court at that facility.

**Old Business:**

Danny LeBlanc asks if we now have Wi-Fi at Acadiana Park. Greg advised that it should be happening in the next couple of weeks. Cox is providing the service, about \$100/month.

**New Business:**

Gerald advised that Chairman Johnnie Stinson will appoint the members to the various committees and the assignments will be mailed out in the coming weeks.

We will leave the date for the next meeting blank for now. We would like to have a facility tour for our next meeting, and will send out a couple of dates to everyone. We will tour the golf courses and visit the summer programs, and have a light lunch; four hours from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. June 13th is one date we will consider; the tour will take the place of our regular meeting – if there's something that you would like to see, let us know. Tour has been very beneficial in the past; members get to see the operations and put faces to names.

No other business.

Harold Porter motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Darrel "Buffy" Massey. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.